

A Vision *for East Baton Rouge Parish*



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East Baton Rouge Vision

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~~Our vision for East Baton Rouge Parish is a pattern of development that responds to the needs and desires of our citizens, seizes opportunities for economic and physical growth respectful of the environment, and continues progress toward our goal of building America's Next Great City.~~

CHAPTER 1

~~Our Great City,~~ ~~from~~ A Vision for East Baton Rouge Parish ~~to Plan~~



Moving the Horizon Plan Forward

~~Baton Rouge has a long history of caring deeply about the community, its residents and the strategies needed to create an even brighter future. Nowhere will you find a community more committed to shaping new ideas and exploring new potential than our City Parish.~~

More than ~~20~~ 30 years ago, Baton Rouge set out to blaze new trails in changing the way the community was growing, changing and using its natural resources. City-Parish residents voted in 1988 to approve a mandate that would establish a comprehensive land use and development plan. The result was the Horizon Plan, a comprehensive land use and development plan that was formally adopted by the Planning Commission and Metropolitan Council in April 1992. It has been successfully updated every five years since then.

The Horizon Plan has served as a guide for making decisions about land use and development within the City-Parish for nearly 20 years. Its primary emphasis was to identify major issues that influence future growth, to decide the actions necessary to address these issues, and to propose specific strategies that will help the City-Parish use its natural resources wisely and efficiently.



~~However, like many cities around the United States, East Baton Rouge Parish has seen a decline in some of its older areas within the community.~~ Residents have expressed concern about an abandoned and declining ~~core areas~~. The hurricanes of 2005 exacerbated the issue, as an influx of new residents created additional development and service pressures on East Baton Rouge Parish. The combination of current trends and the devastation of these storms underscored the need for additional comprehensive planning – to create an environment for positive change and future sustainability. Mayor Holden accelerated the regular update of the Horizon Plan, and in 2008 commissioned the new comprehensive plan update called FUTUREBR. One of the key elements of ~~this update~~ FUTUREBR is a strong commitment to public involvement. Thousands of Parish residents and stakeholders have given input on their vision for the future.

~~This document~~ The plan covers the entire unincorporated area of East Baton Rouge Parish, as well as the city of Baton Rouge. ~~It serves as a summary or~~ The “vision” for the ~~of~~ FUTUREBR Plan, and provides an overview of the goals to be achieved through implementation ~~process and plan components~~.



The Comprehensive Plan Elements include:

- Land Use
- Urban Community Design and Neighborhoods
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Parks and Recreation
- Environment and Conservation
- Public Services and Intergovernmental Coordination
- Infrastructure

Translating a Vision into the New Comprehensive Plan

While a vision provides the long-term goals, a comprehensive plan provides a framework for accomplishing these goals. The FUTUREBR Plan guides housing, economic development, transportation, land use, the environment, urban design and other areas through the decision-making processes. It should remain viable for 20 years or more with updates every five to 10 years to reflect changing conditions.

In addition to the long-term FUTUREBR Comprehensive Plan, the City-Parish will be guided by a short-term Strategic Implementation Plan. The Strategic Plan narrows the focus by providing an outline of short-term actions to meet goals and benchmarks established by the Vision. Included within the Strategic Implementation Plan are detailed actions for specific areas that can be pursued in the upcoming year. The Strategic Implementation Plan should be reviewed and updated annually. This review will provide an inventory of current action items used to implement the plan, consider any changed priorities, and outline successes and lessons learned from preceding activities.

Finally, the City-Parish will track its progress in achieving the Vision with a monitoring program. A monitoring program uses parishwide and local indicators, such as proportion of new development that is infill and redevelopment, compared to annual building permits issued, miles of trails completed, or number of homes within walking distance of transit, to measure implementation performance of a plan.



FUTUREBR's Comprehensive Plan Update Consists of Four Components:

The Vision

- Core values and goals.
- Conceptual vision for the future.
- Executive summary of the Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan (adjusted every 5-10 years)

- Policy framework for land use, transportation, transit, urban design, infrastructure, environmental, recreation, housing, public services and facilities, redevelopment and health and human services.

Strategic Implementation Plan (adjusted every 1-2 years)

- Action items for the City-Parish to pursue now.
- Detailed plans for targeted areas and the City-Parish's initiatives.

Monitoring Plan (adjusted annually)

- Benchmarks and assessments to determine whether the Vision and Plan are being achieved.

To take hold and endure, a vision for the East Baton Rouge Parish must resonate in the hearts and minds of her residents. It has to embody the collective, civic values and ideals

CHAPTER 2

The FUTUREBR —Vision



Workshop participants discussing their ideas for housing and employment location and transportation options for the Parish.

A clear vision for East Baton Rouge's future allows residents, business owners, stakeholders and visitors an opportunity to embrace the City's shared aspirations. This FUTUREBR Vision reflects the input of the people of East Baton Rouge Parish who spoke with a strong voice about what they value in their community and what they want for its future. While residents and stakeholders have similar values, goals and dreams, they agree that some change in the status quo is needed, while in other areas, stability and protection of existing assets is required.

A compelling vision guides and informs the decision-making process and directs resources toward implementation so that the City Parish can begin moving toward its desired future. FUTUREBR provides the opportunity to make sound, informed choices about how to successfully realize this shared community vision—America's Next Great City.

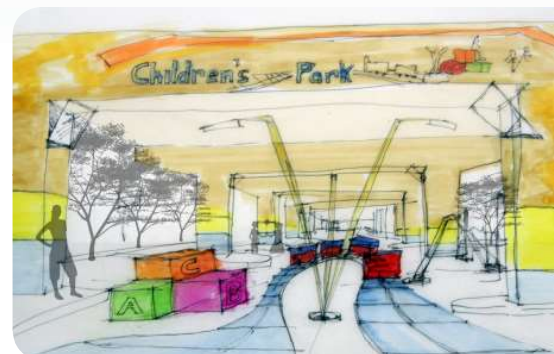


A Future Vision of the Parish

A snapshot of Baton Rouge’s shared vision shows a community that is known for sustainability – in economic, environmental and social equity terms. Baton Rouge’s downtown is strong and vibrant day and night. It’s the heart of the region, with abundant opportunities for living, working and recreation.

Neighborhoods throughout the Parish are thriving and citizens have housing options that are safe, and affordable to a variety of income levels. Every neighborhood has attractive open spaces and residents have many desirable options for getting around, including walking, biking, riding transit and driving. The Mississippi River and other waterways are protected and optimized for multiple uses.

The Parish has an exemplary K-12 school system that offers educational opportunities for all residents. The Parish’s colleges and universities are national leaders in a variety of fields and are surrounded by successful neighborhoods that are well-linked with downtown and other parts of the City. The Parish’s economy is prosperous, with a mix of traditional industries and new business sectors. The Parish is renowned for embracing and cultivating new talent and ideas whether in the arts, business or the public realm.



Robert Terrell



Parish residents and stakeholders were able to participate and provide valuable feedback in community workshops, open houses and as part of the FUTUREBR survey.

Input for the Vision

If it is to take hold and endure, a vision for the Parish must resonate in the hearts and minds of its residents. It must embody the collective civic values and ideals drawn directly from its citizens. In developing the Vision, the FUTUREBR team ~~worked with~~ **involved** hundreds of residents in ~~one-on-one~~ workshops and open houses, and thousands contributed their opinion in online surveys **in 2009 and 2010**. Through this inclusive outreach process, residents explored ideas, expressed opinions, and identified potential future strategies for shaping the Parish's future.

FUTUREBR included seven community workshops – two were parishwide, four were at a neighborhood scale, and one had a transportation focus. Attendance totaled nearly 800 at these workshops, marking a significant community interest in future planning. The workshop concepts were tested in land use scenario options, and the best results are reflected in this vision. In addition, the planning commission held 15 district open houses – and 350 citizens attended these to hear about work in progress, offer critiques and suggestions, and interact with the planning team in an informal setting. Of those participating, at least two-thirds were first-time participants in the City-Parish's planning processes. Finally, nearly 3,400 people participated in an online survey to provide input on the final policy decisions that shape the Vision **and** Plan and ~~Strategic Implementation Plan~~.

The FUTUREBR update included ten community workshops in 2017 and 2018 with hundred of citizens reviewing the Plan and providing comments.

~~With this extensive and meaningful input, the Vision can be embraced by the public, since it now embodies Parish citizens' hopes, ideas, personalities, voices and dreams for the future of our community.~~

Great cities don't just happen. Great cities require considerable discussion, citizen participation, leadership and creativity—~~all strengths of East Baton Rouge Parish.~~

Core Values and Dreams

A diverse group of residents and stakeholders representing all parts of East Baton Rouge Parish provided input through workshops, open houses, interviews, focus groups and survey discussions. Respondents consistently cited the following core values and aspirations they believed should be the foundation for building a vision for East Baton Rouge Parish.

Prosperity: All residents have access to a thriving economy with job opportunities in growing diverse businesses.

Equity: All residents have access to a good education, public services, housing and job opportunities.

Diversity: The City is known for embracing diversity and acceptance of other cultures, ethnicities and groups.

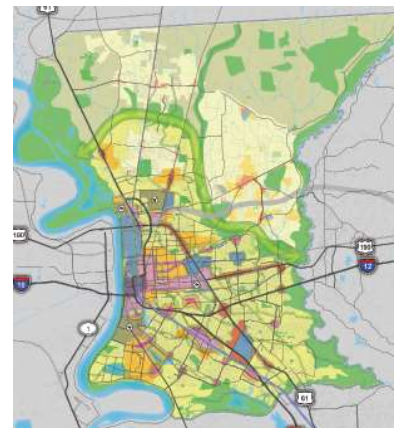
Safety: People feel safe where they live, work and play.

Strong Neighborhoods and Communities: Neighborhoods in all areas of the City-Parish are desirable places to live and have a range of housing types and nearby amenities to serve residents.

Convenient Transportation: People and goods have new choices, as well as improved existing ways to move throughout the parish.

Healthy Environment: Natural resources are protected and conserved to provide active and passive recreational opportunities for current and future residents.

Sustainability: The future reflects the creativity and resiliency of East Baton Rouge's young residents and offers a sustainable place for youth to thrive – with a focus on building a future based on fiscal, physical, environmental, economic and equitable sustainability.








Mapping the Parish

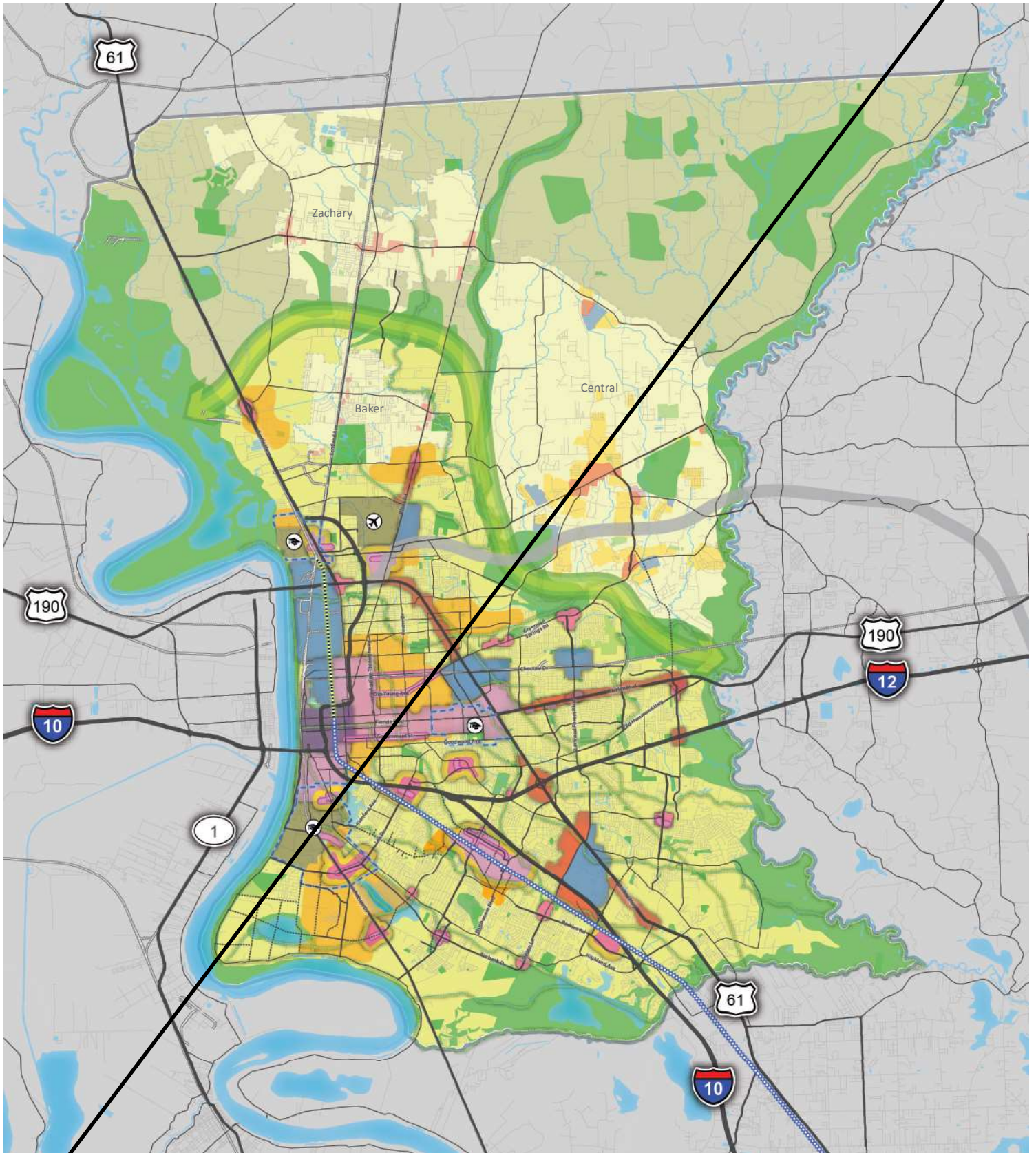
Part of the process for shaping the Parish's new direction is to create a map to point the way. Using the core values and dreams, workshop and survey input, FUTUREBR developed the Vision map presented on the next page. It depicts the Parish's land use and transportation future.

FUTUREBR Vision Map

The FUTUREBR Vision Map is an illustration of the Parish's future, as outlined by planning participants and stakeholders. This map depicts how various key elements – such as future growth, neighborhoods and districts, reinvestment along corridors, new centers and a vibrant downtown – will function. The map should not be mistaken for a document with a force of law or regulatory function. **It is a conceptual tool**, providing ideas, direction and focus for crafting the parish's land use program, the comprehensive plan policies, and transportation maps, and ultimately the zoning code.

Vision Legend

-  Downtown
-  New Mixed-Use Centers
-  Mixed-Use Corridor
-  Commercial Areas
-  Employment Centers
-  New Neighborhood
-  Existing Neighborhood
-  Agricultural and Rural Communities
-  Regional Parks and Open Space
-  University Districts
-  Main Street
-  Regional Rail
-  Potential Regional Rail Extension



One of the fundamental goals of this plan is to develop a more resilient, walkable, prosperous East Baton Rouge Parish.

CHAPTER 3

Achieving the Vision



Workshop participants presenting their ideas for housing and employment location and transportation options for the Parish.

The FUTUREBR Vision is a summary of the upcoming Comprehensive Plan. The Plan will include a specific policy framework for land use, transportation, transit, urban design, infrastructure, environment, recreation, housing, public services and facilities, redevelopment and health and human services. Here in the Vision, we've organized the concepts into the following subsections. These subsections encompass the elements of the Plan.

- Distinctive Neighborhoods and Districts
- Transportation Options
- Creating Balanced Housing
- Creating a Strong Economy
- Managing Environmental Resources

Distinctive Neighborhoods and Districts

Baton Rouge, by its history and nature, is organized into unique and distinctive neighborhoods and districts



Spanish Town neighborhood



Downtown

Distinctive Neighborhoods and Districts

Think of how specifically Parish residents describe where they live or work – downtown, the Garden District, Spanish Town, Scotlandville, Mid City – these are all districts or neighborhoods, each with distinct characteristics. Foundational, cohesive districts will both match the existing development patterns and also be easy to describe as new additions are recommended in the plan.

Achieving Self-Reliant and Complete Design

To be cohesive, districts typically share common characteristics – architecture, history, civic institutions such as a school or park, or a common ethnic background among many of the residents. The district concept becomes especially useful when combined with land use and transportation concepts. One of the fundamental goals of this plan is to develop a more resilient, pedestrian-friendly, prosperous East Baton Rouge. Applying these ideas to a district concept leads to the idea of more self-contained districts, where one can find many of the residents' or workers' daily needs close by – a short drive or even a short walk – within 20 minutes.

Distinctive Neighborhoods and Districts

Small Area Planning

Stakeholders recorded their vision for the future during seven public parishwide and small area workshops. Their input was incorporated in conjunction with urban design principles, financial analyses, and planning research to create realistic small area plans for these eight districts. These district plans delineate how the Parish should grow in the future and establish programs needed to support desired growth and development. In addition, the plans provide criteria for comprehensive plan policies that will guide decision makers in implementing the FUTUREBR Vision parishwide.

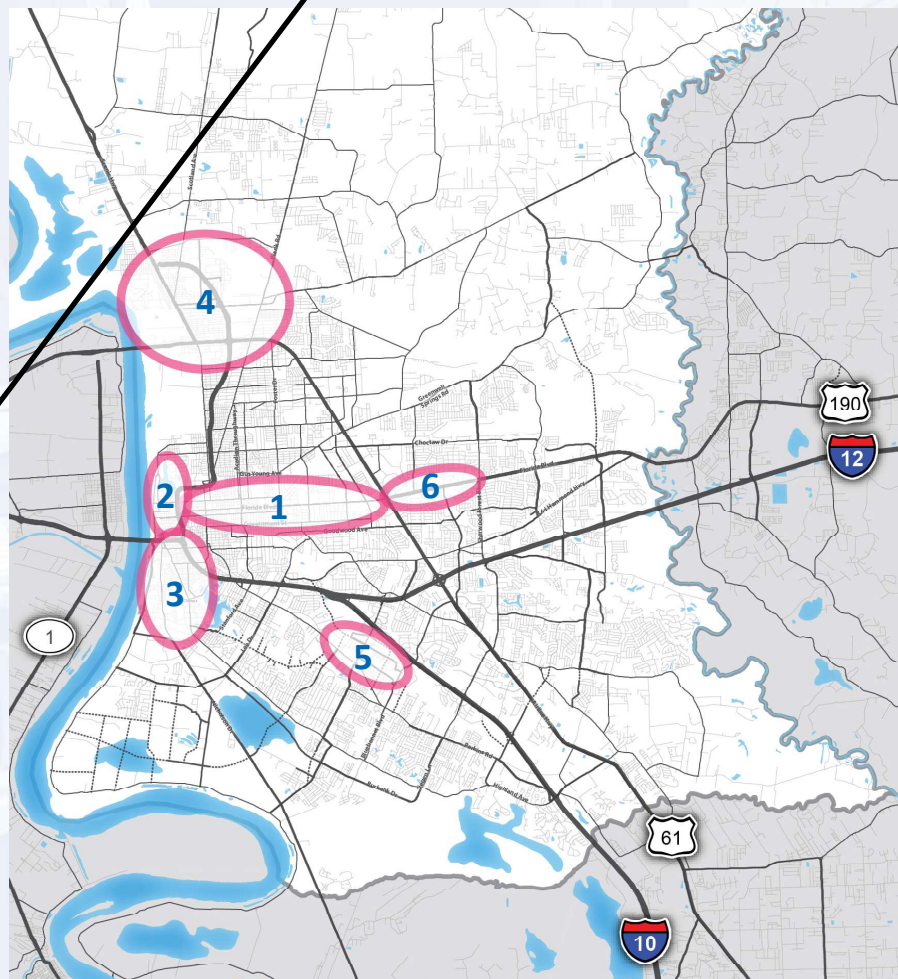
Downtown, Scotlandville, and Zion City/Glen Oaks have planning efforts under way through the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority (EBRDA), Southern University and the Downtown Development District. Old South Baton Rouge has also undergone an extensive planning process in the recent past.

Key Neighborhoods and Districts

Key neighborhoods and districts were selected based on a range of factors such as strategic location within the City-Parish, neighborhood interest, anticipated redevelopment potential, growth pressures, and likelihood of areas to capitalize on future transit options.

1. Mid City
2. Downtown
3. LSU, Old South Baton Rouge, Nicholson and Northgate area
4. Southern University, Scotlandville, Zion City and the Airport area
5. South Medical District
6. Broadmoor Shopping Center and Cortana Mall area

Key Neighborhood and District Locations



The Goals Of Neighborhood

The 20-Minute Neighborhood

Many residents of East Baton Rouge Parish would say that their quality of life is in part related to where they live and how much effort it takes to get to work, get kids to school, get involved with neighbors or have access to a local park. And while residents may take these features for granted, FUTUREBR sees the concept of the “20-minute neighborhood” – one where residents can walk to essential amenities and services in 20 minutes – as a vital element of a healthy neighborhood.

While many will prefer to drive, (a 20-minute walk might only be a 5-minute drive) others will prefer the opportunity to live in a neighborhood, including neighborhoods outside of the City’s core, that provide all of the necessary and enjoyable things like grocery stores, workplaces, open spaces, libraries, events, and schools – within 20-minutes of home, whether this occurs on foot or by transit, bike or car.

Retaining the Character of Existing Neighborhoods

FUTUREBR envisions retaining the best and most cherished aspects of the districts while allowing them to evolve to meet the challenges of future growth. There are many different types of neighborhoods, each with unique characteristics: traditional neighborhoods built before the 1950s, such as Spanish Town, Beauregard Town and the Garden District; neighborhoods such as Sherwood Forest, Shenandoah and Oak Hills Place, built since the 1960s; and other areas such as Mid City which are evolving from a series of neighborhoods and transportation corridors into vibrant mixed-use districts with tremendous potential.

Through the public involvement workshops and other outreach efforts, district residents helped paint the picture of how these areas can be changed for the better.



Many People Might Envy a 20-Minute Lifestyle

Researchers at Texas A&M report that, as a nation, we waste an amazing \$87 billion each year on lost productivity and fuel costs while stuck in traffic. Researchers recently found that suburban moms, on average, spend the equivalent of 17 full days behind the wheel each year, much of it ferrying their kids around from one place to another.



Distinctive Neighborhoods and Districts



The Mid City neighborhood, with its small businesses and well-connected street grid, has the potential to become a vibrant, desirable place to live and work.

Mid City

Outside of downtown, perhaps no other area in East Baton Rouge Parish holds as much redevelopment potential as Mid City. Spanning about two miles from the proposed passenger rail station just east of downtown to the campus of Baton Rouge Community College, this area includes Baton Rouge General Medical Center, several established historic neighborhoods, and numerous parks and schools within a well-connected street grid. Florida Boulevard, Government Street and North Boulevard connect the area directly into downtown, the Capitol Complex, Spanish Town, and Beauregard Town. Redevelopment of the Westmoreland Shopping Center, reuse of the Woman's Hospital and investment in properties located between the Baton Rouge General Medical Center and Baton Rouge Community College all provide excellent opportunities to strengthen the district.

As the improvements to downtown continue to transform the city center into a primary destination, the market for redevelopment within Mid City will increase. People want to live within a pedestrian-friendly distance of downtown. Redevelopment of Florida Boulevard and Government Street are expected to lead the way in transforming Mid City into a vibrant, desirable area.

Distinctive Neighborhoods and Districts

Potential Development Along Government Street in Mid City



Distinctive Neighborhoods and Districts

Plan Baton Rouge Phase II Priority Actions Include:

- Promote a central green and plant an urban forest.
- Make Third Street an entertainment corridor.
- Make downtown clean and safe.
- Create financial incentives for developing downtown housing.
- Establish an integrated public parking policy and agency.



Downtown—Plan Baton Rouge II

The revitalization of downtown is a great example of how Baton Rouge has been able to set a vision and take concrete steps toward achieving its goals. Baton Rouge has reinvested in the central city, capitalized on the proximity to the waterfront and created an active, livable, pedestrian-oriented, enjoyable place that's a well-deserved source of pride for the region. A major downtown planning effort called Plan Baton Rouge is now in its 12th year of implementation, and a Phase II update was recently completed to continue the revitalization momentum.



Extend levee top

Extend Capital Park Blvd. to River Rd.

Narrow River Rd. and landscape both sides

Design a gateway at the Spanish Town overpass

Create a pedestrian connection to DeSoto Park from Welcome Center at Capitol Park

Allow two-way traffic on Laurel

Create at-grade crossings on River Rd. at all main streets

Design gateway at Northern Blvd. at 1-110 overpass

Bridge over Waterworks site to LASM and the river

Improve pedestrian experience on Government St.

Allow two-way traffic on St. Ferdinand and St. Louis Streets

Restore South Blvd. to a divided boulevard

Design gateway to St. Louis St. at South Blvd.

Plan Baton Rouge Phase II study area map

Distinctive Neighborhoods and Districts



Plan Baton Rouge Phase II downtown visualization

Distinctive Neighborhoods and Districts

Louisiana State University, Old South, Nicholson Drive and Northgate Area

Old South Baton Rouge is well positioned to re-emerge as one of the City's most beloved neighborhoods. Historically, the district included some of the best and most popular restaurants, department stores, and theaters. Recently federal grants from the HOPE VI program have brought investment to the community, and significant progress has been made in creating quality, affordable housing options for Old South Baton Rouge residents.

The neighborhood is linked to downtown and Louisiana State University by Highland Road and tree-lined Nicholson Drive. A proposed street car route along Nicholson Drive will spur significant additional private investment in the area. Continued reinvestment in the LSU Northgate area will strengthen connections to campus, and efforts to improve linkages to University Lake and Lake Crest will strengthen the area's connection to nature and provide benefits to the larger community.



Potential Development Along Highland Road Near LSU



Distinctive Neighborhoods and Districts

Potential Street Car and Development Along Nicholson Drive



Distinctive Neighborhoods and Districts



Southern University administration building



Swan Street in Scotlandville

Southern University, Scotlandville, Zion City and the Airport Area

Located directly adjacent to Southern University, the Scotlandville gateway has been the focus of targeted, community-led redevelopment efforts in partnership with the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority since 2009. The gateway to Southern University – and a functional northern gateway into the city of Baton Rouge – is slated for major improvements that will reinstate a feeling of neighborhood pride and subsequent reinvestment in the area. The RDA, Southern University Community Design Research Center and the Mayor's Green Light Program, along with other groups, have worked extensively with residents and business owners to build momentum for improvements that focus on historic preservation and increasing livability.

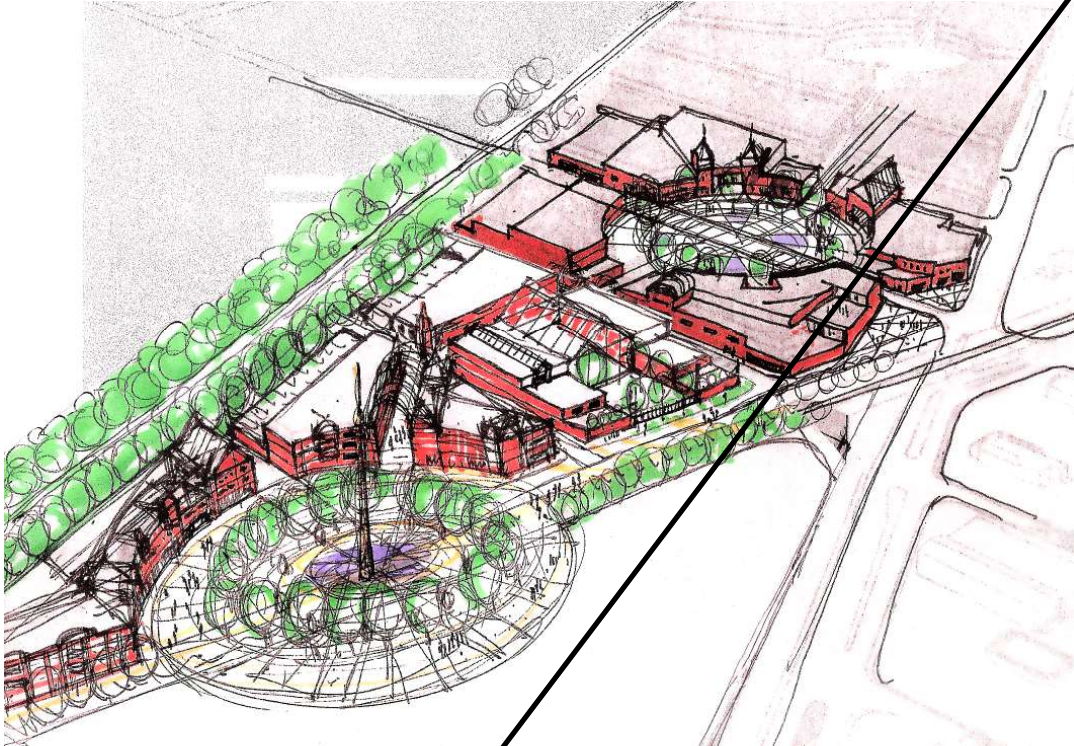
Early successes include a business façade improvement program and streetscape improvements for Swan Avenue. Future redevelopment plans include a neighborhood grocery store, small mixed-use infill projects, single-family houses, townhouses and apartments to be built within existing neighborhoods.

Baton Rouge Metro Airport connects the City-Parish to the larger region and global economy with more than 50 daily flights to and from four major airline hubs. Recent redevelopment adjacent to the airport includes a LEED-certified, 780,000-square-foot Coca-Cola bottling facility. A 50,000-square-foot airport-oriented business park is planned for construction. Airport enhancements will help the Parish achieve more of its economic diversity goals, which include attracting more foreign investment and foreign-owned companies. These employment centers will provide family-wage jobs for hundreds of Baton Rouge residents.

Once part of a larger residential district, portions of Zion City neighborhoods were purchased and demolished in the 1970s to create space for the Baton Rouge Airport. Recently, community-led efforts in partnership with the RDA and the Mayor's Green Light Program have done an excellent job of identifying opportunities to mend difficult connections within the district and foster community pride. Initiatives currently under way include proposed improvements to Plank Road, Simplex Street and Ford Street. Community-led efforts seek to create or improve family-wage housing, neighborhood services, parks and streetscape improvements, including introduction of sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian areas, street drainage and neighborhood scale lighting.

Distinctive Neighborhoods and Districts

Scotlandville Comprehensive Community Development Plan Concepts



Concept for a potential university district at the gateway to Southern University



Potential facade enhancements along Swan Street

Distinctive Neighborhoods and Districts



South Medical District

Great cities need premier medical and research facilities—Baton Rouge is fortunate to have both. The South Medical District is a regional hub for health services with Our Lady of the Lake Hospital soon becoming the teaching hospital for LSU's Medical College and the Baton Rouge General Medical Center campus continuing to expand. The Pennington Biomedical Research Center is an emerging national leader in health science research. Newer neighborhoods border the district, and the majority of trips are taken via the interstate or by one of three primary arterials in the district: Bluebonnet Boulevard, Essen Lane and Perkins Road. Reconnecting a network of lower-traffic volume neighborhood streets would transform the area, significantly improving livability for employees, residents and visitors by providing alternative routes for local trips.

The popular Perkins Rowe mixed-use neighborhood has expanded housing, dining and shopping options. This compact neighborhood provides a model for additional residential, retail and commercial development options in this area. A proposed station on the future passenger rail system will provide an excellent alternate transportation option for the district.



Potential Commuter Rail Line and Transit in the South Medical District



Distinctive Neighborhoods and Districts

Broadmoor Shopping Center and Cortana Mall Area

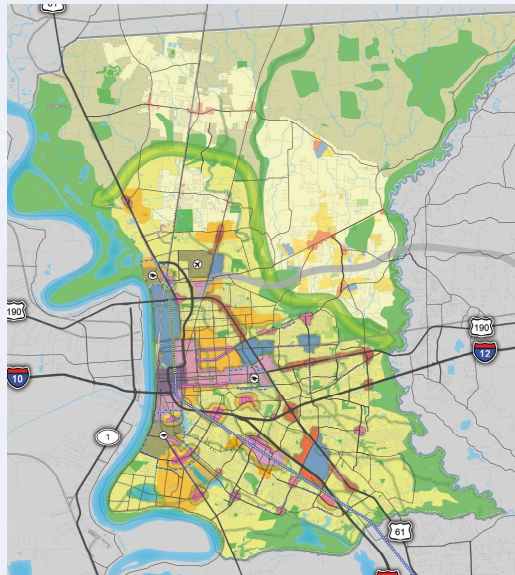
The Broadmoor Shopping Center and Cortana Mall Area is primarily a district of residential neighborhoods located just beyond a layer of commercial and retail uses on Florida Boulevard. Cortana Mall, the largest mall in East Baton Rouge, anchors the district to the west, and Sherwood Forest Drive forms the eastern boundary.

While the Cortana Mall is largely occupied, it's likely to redevelop within the next 20 years. Redevelopment along Florida Boulevard between Airline Highway and Sherwood Forest Drive will strengthen the surrounding neighborhoods and create an attractive gateway into the City. Bus rapid transit on Airline Highway and Florida Boulevard will increase transportation choices and further connect this area to downtown and the larger region.

Potential Improved Transit and Development Near the Cortana Mall



Land Use Building Blocks



Vision Legend

-  Downtown
-  New Mixed-Use Centers
-  Mixed-Use Corridor
-  Commercial Areas
-  Employment Centers
-  New Neighborhood
-  Existing Neighborhood
-  Agricultural and Rural Communities
-  Regional Parks and Open Space
-  University Districts
-  Main Street

Land Use Building Blocks

Building blocks essentially refer to the categories, or types, of land uses that East Baton Rouge residents say they want to help shape livable communities. These building blocks form a clearer picture of how the City-Parish will change and improve – combining specific land uses, urban design concepts, and transportation elements – and form the basis of the plan’s land use categories. ***The City-Parish’s future land uses will be broadly organized under the following building blocks:***

- Downtown
- New Mixed-Use Centers
- Mixed-Use Corridors
- Commercial Areas
- Employment Centers
- New Neighborhoods
- Existing Neighborhoods
- University Districts
- Agricultural Areas and Rural Communities
- Parks and Open Space

Land Use Building Blocks



Downtown

Downtown will thrive as the dynamic, regional hub for business, tourism and entertainment. It will serve as the center for municipal and state government, and feature arts and performance venues, convention facilities, and attractive historical tourist destinations. Many residents will work downtown, where high-quality office space and an efficient transit system will enable a rich diversity of businesses to attract great talent that serves clients, visitors and residents.

Newly-developed, high-density condominiums, apartments, lofts and townhomes further support a true urban neighborhood. These downtown residents add to the street life, support a robust restaurant and night-life scene, and enjoy easy access to urban parks, plazas and the Mississippi Riverfront. Urban amenities include schools, religious institutions, museums, galleries and a new downtown library.

There will be easy access to downtown by transit or car. This will be the parish's main transit hub, where high-frequency bus and rail transit converge. Visitors arriving on regional rail to Mid City or from the airport on high-capacity transit will enjoy easy connections to local transit. Commuters from outlying neighborhoods will easily reach downtown via bus, bike, walking, rail or car.



New Mixed-Use Centers

Mixed-use centers will thrive throughout the City-Parish, serving the employment, shopping, and entertainment needs of neighborhoods throughout East Baton Rouge Parish. They will provide a cluster of goods and services, allowing people to make just one trip to fulfill a variety of needs at regional retail, entertainment and recreational facilities.

Regional and local transportation systems will link the centers to downtown Baton Rouge and other regional destinations, so people can drive, take transit, walk or bike where they need to go. Once people arrive in the center, they will get around primarily by foot or bicycle on attractive pedestrian walkways. Where appropriate, some mixed-use centers will provide housing above shops and services, creating a true living neighborhood with an active atmosphere into the evening.

Land Use Building Blocks

Mixed-Use Corridors

Corridors will stitch the City-Parish together, serving local and regional traffic. They also will have their own identity as unique places with jobs, housing and shopping amenities.



Mixed-Use Arterial Corridors

Arterial mixed-use corridors will link downtown and other centers as the backbone of East Baton Rouge's transportation system. While the majority of people will still travel by car, some arterials will have dedicated bus and bike lanes. The urban design within mixed-use arterials should be comfortable for pedestrians, and the infrastructure will include sidewalks, street trees, crosswalks and on-street parallel parking. These corridors will include some mixed-use condos and apartments for people who want to live in an active, accessible area.



Main Street Corridors

Main streets will be the heart of smaller, neighborhood communities located throughout the parish, with renewed attention and investment from the public and private sectors. Representing some of Baton Rouge's most culturally interesting and lively places to be, each main street will have its own unique flavor and vibe. Each will serve its unique, surrounding neighborhood and will attract visitors to cafes, shops and eateries. Main streets tend to specialize in different types of businesses, such as those related to dining, art galleries or specialty apparel and will attract visitors from around the region. Buildings along main streets feature an attractive variety of continuous storefronts. They generally range from one to three stories, with housing on upper levels.

Land Use Building Blocks



Commercial Areas

Commercial areas primarily function as service and job destinations. They currently serve many Baton Rouge residents on a daily basis and consist of corridors with nodes commonly located at the intersection of major roadways, where businesses are easily accessed via automobiles. The intersection of Florida Boulevard and Airline Highway, studied in a community workshop, is an example of a commercial area. Buildings in these destination areas typically stand one to five stories with offices, restaurants, and a range of shopping. While the commercial area may contain a mix of uses, they tend to be located on separate parcels. In addition to jobs and services, commercial centers or corridors also may include multi-family housing in low- to mid-rise apartment buildings or condominiums. Parking is plentiful in these areas as uses are predominately auto-oriented. With a significant amount of destination shopping, landscaping and design will enhance the visitor's experience. For large shopping centers this may involve the addition of civic uses such as public plazas or other "town center" features.



Employment Centers

These business districts will create professional and support jobs in a range of service-oriented fields that benefit from being close to one another.. Hospitals and medical offices, office complexes, and other commercial enterprises bringing many people to one place will be a natural fit for pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use centers. Located near highways and transit stops for easy access, employees and customers will enjoy attractive and convenient pedestrian connections to and within the district.

Employment centers will range in character from the medical district – a cluster of hospitals, research facilities, and medical offices in the southern part of the parish – to the airport district, with a focus on transportation-related industries and other manufacturing and distribution businesses. These important urban anchors will feature convenient access from nearby workforce housing.

Land Use Building Blocks



New Neighborhoods

New neighborhoods will combine a spacious and affordable residential environment with nearby commercial areas and job accessibility. The key aspect of new neighborhoods is accessibility both within the community and to the City-Parish's overall transportation network. Streets will provide a variety of routes and include bike lanes and sidewalks.

In keeping with Baton Rouge's tradition of single-family neighborhoods, new neighborhoods will consist primarily of individual homes. Small-scale multi-family housing such as apartments, townhomes, or condos can be designed to blend in the single-family neighborhoods or along the edges.

Improved zoning flexibility will allow developers to deliver cohesive, pedestrian-friendly, safe neighborhoods with a mix of uses to serve residents. These will be organized around a neighborhood center where grocery stores, retail shops and services are located within walking or a short driving distance from homes. Religious institutions, libraries, schools, community centers and parks will continue to be important anchors of the Baton Rouge community and culture.



Existing Neighborhoods

The established single-family neighborhoods of Baton Rouge will continue to be vital assets to the urban fabric. They will be preserved in this new vision for the parish and revitalized where needed. Nearby main streets and major arterial streets will be enhanced with sidewalks, bike lanes and better transit service. Shops, restaurants and other amenities will be located within walking distance of homes.

In areas of historically significant, but underserved, neighborhoods, there will be reinvestment and improvements. The City-Parish's reinvestment programs will help homeowners improve houses and apartment buildings by providing funds or assistance to upgrade facades, increase energy efficiency, and make other needed repairs. Zoning code revisions will provide flexibility that allows transitioning neighborhoods to encourage context-sensitive, mixed-use infill redevelopment on existing lots. Parks, schools, libraries, community centers and religious institutions will continue to be important community assets and will be protected and well maintained. With streetscape investments, school-age children will be able to walk or bike to and from neighborhood schools.

University Districts

Vibrant neighborhoods around the parish's renowned universities and colleges will cater to students, college faculty and employees, alumni retirees, and others who want to live in a lively campus-village district. Each center will have a unique atmosphere with specialty amenities and attractions, including retail, cafes, bars, restaurants, hotels and entertainment venues. Housing will include a broad range of student housing types mixed within the urban fabric, and there will be apartments, townhomes and condos geared toward faculty and staff. The proximity to university resources also will enhance the potential for new jobs and businesses in these areas.



Agricultural and Rural Communities

Single-family homes on large rural lots are located in the northern part of the Parish. A few small stores provide limited goods and services, and most residents get to employment and shopping by car. Because homes are spread out and far from urban centers, the municipal cost of providing emergency services and infrastructure development is comparatively high.

Agriculture will be important to the future of the East Baton Rouge Parish. Sustaining a viable livestock and farming economy could include efforts to improve farm tourism, as well as marketing local produce to East Baton Rouge residents. Local products such as fruits, vegetables, poultry, and eggs will be featured at the Main Street Market, Red Stick Farmers Market, and other newly established neighborhood markets.

Land Use Building Blocks



Regional Parks and Open Space

East Baton Rouge Parish has a strong network of existing green spaces. Favorite places such as Bluebonnet Swamp, Frenchtown Road and Blackwater Conservation areas, Waddill Wildlife Refuge, and well-loved neighborhood parks will be joined by new parks and open spaces. New and existing neighborhoods may use a nearby park as a community gathering point.

Open spaces – whether conservation areas, preserved wetlands, and nature trails or a system of well designed parks for organized sports, festivals and concerts – encourage a healthy lifestyle of easily accessible recreation. Parks and open spaces will be spread throughout the City-Parish and centrally located within neighborhoods, ensuring that all residents can easily access them on foot, by bike

Creating Transportation Choices



Creating Transportation Choices

The FUTUREBR team understands the congestion issues that exist in the Baton Rouge area. To that end, several strategies are proposed for immediate implementation, which consist of a combination of road construction projects and policies. Looking to the future, a growing, thriving City-Parish needs a modern transportation network capable of effectively moving people throughout the area. Extensive public input has made it clear that citizens want a robust transportation network that includes not only a well-connected network of streets, but also the ability to use other modes of transportation in and around Baton Rouge.

Local Congestion

Residents of East Baton Rouge Parish do not need a study to show that severe congestion exists – they experience it every day. This issue permeates all levels of society. It creates lost time on the roads, added expense of wasted fuel, unreliable travel times for the same daily trips and impaired ability of emergency vehicles to respond to incidents – just to name a few. Ultimately, local congestion limits the potential of the City-Parish.

To ease local congestion within the Parish, certain local corridors should be improved or widened. By adding capacity to the overall system, the travelling public will see an immediate improvement to their daily lives. A specific list of projects are recommended for construction in the Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Implementation Plan. These projects will be tested in a regional model to ensure that each project has a direct impact on local congestion.

Creating Transportation Choices

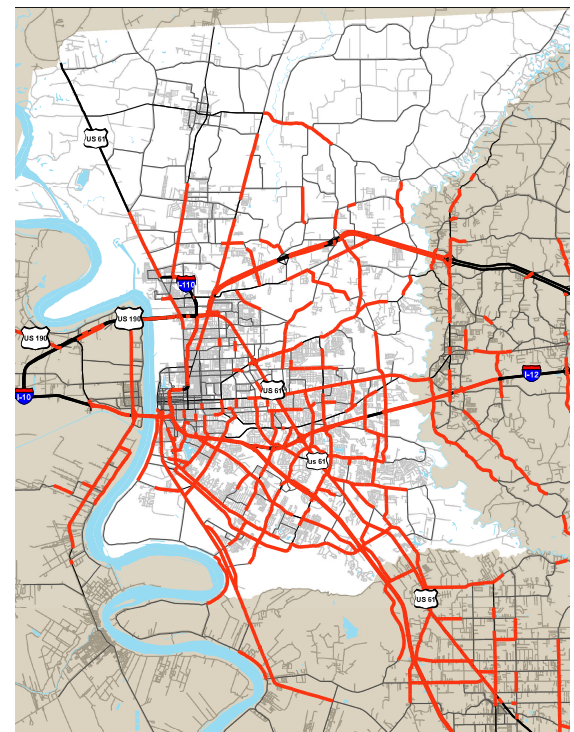
Regional Congestion

The city of Baton Rouge serves as the seat of government for the state of Louisiana, the heart of the regional business community and location to several higher education institutions. Other assets located in Baton Rouge that are accessed by long range trips include a regional airport, the medical district, numerous industrial plants and a port. While the intent of the plan is to discourage sprawl, these facilities need reliable and convenient access to regional transportation facilities to be successful. To fix the existing congestion in the region, several capacity projects are needed.

The Baton Rouge area must have the ability to safely and quickly evacuate its residents from natural or other disasters. For example, a number of evacuations have recently taken place under the threat of a hurricane. The travel time and congestion associated with the evacuations were below acceptable levels. By adding capacity to key locations and providing alternate routes, these evacuations can be more effective. On a more frequent basis, it is not uncommon for congestion from one accident on the interstate system to cascade onto most of the local streets in the southern portion of the parish – crippling the entire network. To avoid this paralyzing situation, alternate routes must be developed on the regional level so the public can select an alternate route and by-pass the “choke point.”



Predicted Congestion in the Region



Predictions based on current land use and transportation trends

— congested roadways

Creating Transportation Choices

A Disconnected Medical District Street Network



An Example of a Disconnected Street Network

Although most driving trips are local, meaning within a few miles of home or work, the current trend for transportation networks (like the one seen here in the Medical District) relies on a few major roadways to funnel traffic around the parish. This type of network forces even short trips onto these major roads, which increases congestion for everyone and makes walking or biking difficult.

Local Connectivity

One of the Parish's greatest transportation problems is the lack of connectivity, or the inability to get around neighborhoods and districts without going onto a major arterial or highway. Except for in and around the central city area, much of the Parish has been developed in a suburban post-war model, with few connections between isolated developments.

The local street network can be "healed" by adding additional local streets or pathways to connect currently disconnected areas both in areas that are already developed and in new development areas. Investing in these smaller connections reduces congestion by getting short driving trips off major roads and allowing walkers and bikers a safer network of routes to areas of activities, such as shops, parks and schools.

Creating this network would require building some new streets, as well as extending existing streets to create connections between neighborhoods and shopping and employment districts. By creating connectivity within the City, we can relieve traffic congestion and make it easier to get around the Parish. In addition, this new connectivity support system will support increased density within the City, and over time, support other modes of transportation.

Creating Transportation Choices

A Well Connected Street Network in Mid City



Corridor Connectivity

Several areas of the parish are experiencing growth pressure that will require the support of a complete transportation network to grow successfully. New roads should be designed to be well connected and to accommodate projected development needs.

Areas that will benefit from establishing new roadway corridors include the medical district area, the southern part of the parish and new development areas. For example, a new roadway corridor that shows significant connectivity potential is the realignment and extension of Pecue Lane. The existing street network in the vicinity of this road has significant gaps that prevent the transportation system from functioning as a grid. By connecting Pecue Lane from Highland Road to Coursey Boulevard, a significant gap in the grid will be filled.

An Example of Well-Connected Street Network

Creating new local streets or pathways to connect currently disconnected areas can help to alleviate congestion by reducing the number of vehicles on major roads.

Where is New Connectivity Most Likely to Occur?

Creating new streets in areas that have been originally designed with a lack of connectivity can be difficult and must have the support of local residents. Most new connectivity will likely occur with new development or areas undergoing redevelopment that have many dead-end streets and vacant land parcels. As well, connectivity updates might occur more frequently in commercial areas where there is typically more vacant land and larger parcels.

Creating Transportation Choices

Principles of Complete Streets

- Balance safety, mobility, community and environmental goals in all projects.
- Involve the public and stakeholders early and continuously throughout the planning and project development process.
- Use an interdisciplinary team tailored to project needs.
- Address all modes of travel.
- Apply flexibility in design standards.
- Incorporate aesthetics as an integral part of good design.

Complete Streets Help to Serve All Road Users

New roadways should be designed as “complete streets” so that they serve all users and meet the needs of the built environment and the community. Traditionally, streets have been designed to have the same layout throughout their length. Complete streets adapt the lanes, parking, sidewalks and other transportation modes to meet the needs of the surrounding areas, while also accommodating the traffic flow. A number of the Horizon Plan policies support a complete streets program, and this recommendation builds on the foundation of the Horizon Plan.

Priority corridors for potentially implementing a complete streets program include parts of Florida Boulevard, Government Street, Plank Road, Scenic Highway, Highland Road and Nicholson Drive.

Different Land Use Building Blocks Require Different Street Types

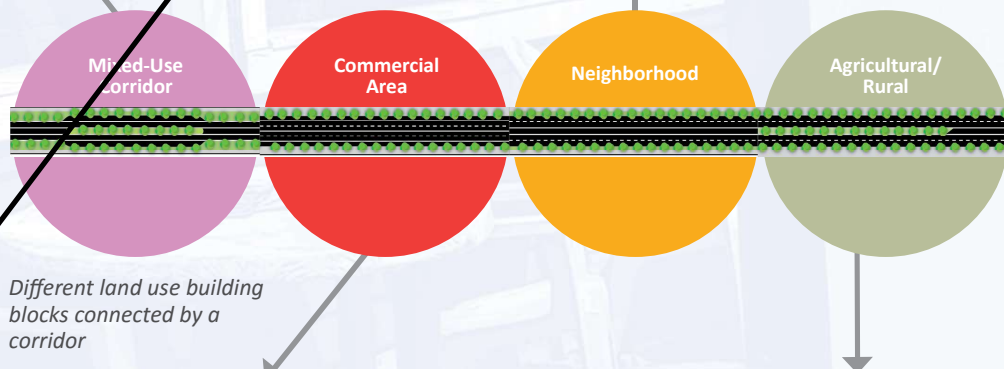


Mixed-use corridor cross-section



New neighborhood street cross-section

To best serve the different needs of the land use building blocks, a complete street will adapt its design along the corridor.



Different land use building blocks connected by a corridor



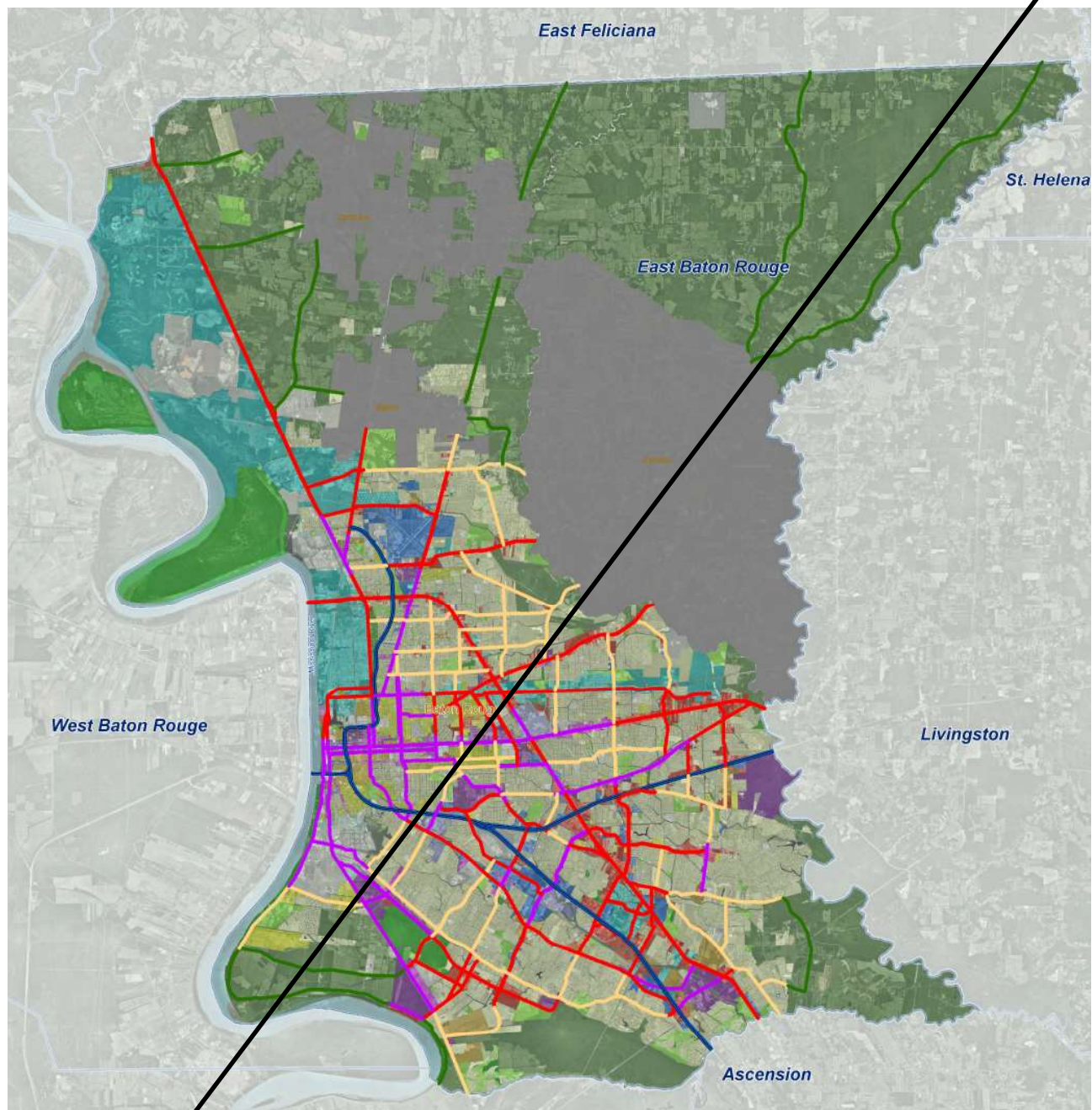
Commercial area cross-



Agricultural/ Rural cross-section

Creating Transportation Choices






Complete Street Locations



WHERE WILL COMPLETE STREETS GO?

The map depicts how Complete Streets design policies can be applied on the ground in East Baton Rouge Parish. Several corridors should be the first areas to apply the Complete Streets approach. These include portions of:

- Florida Boulevard
- Government Street
- Nicholson Drive
- Perkins Road
- Airline Highway
- Plank Road

-  Commercial
-  Freeway
-  Mixed-Use/Main Street/Downtown
-  Neighborhood Streets
-  Agriculture/Rural

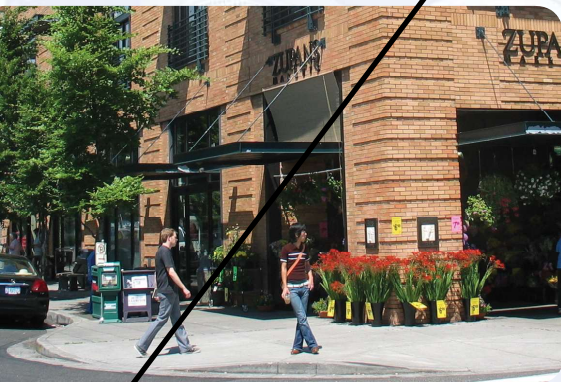
Creating Transportation Choices



Among the Most Important Changes Needed Are Small in Scale, but Critical to the Parish's Walking Infrastructure

Many neighborhoods, which today are not inviting to pedestrians, will be improved with safer and more inviting sidewalks, pedestrian-oriented intersections and other features that alert drivers to pedestrians. The parish will also continue to develop and expand its network of paths and trails.

Strategies to develop 20-minute neighborhoods and increase investment in main streets and neighborhood centers will create pedestrian-oriented destinations within a short distance of most residents. The convenient access to daily needs not only removes cars from congested roadways, but also improves individual and community health through increased exercise.



Creating Walkable Communities

People choose to walk rather than drive when they have destinations to walk to: shops, work, parks and schools. These routes need to feel comfortable and safe. A well-designed sidewalk or path provides a sense of enclosure and safety through the use of trees, benches, light poles, a vibrant street wall of shops, and even parked cars. People-friendly places have a compounding impact on pedestrian activity – people attract more people. Vibrant, pedestrian-friendly cities develop a culture of walking by paying particular attention to these design details. Today the Parish's culture is auto-oriented and few workers or residents walk even a few blocks to a destination. In downtown however, the walking culture is changing because of increased residential uses and streetscape improvements. More is needed to encourage a walking culture to other areas of the Parish.

Expanding the Bicycle Network

The Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC) provides an extensive network of biking and walking paths and trails throughout the parish. Building on this foundation by expanding the network of paths for recreational riding, as well as better integrating bicycle facilities within the existing street network, will create a robust bicycle network system.

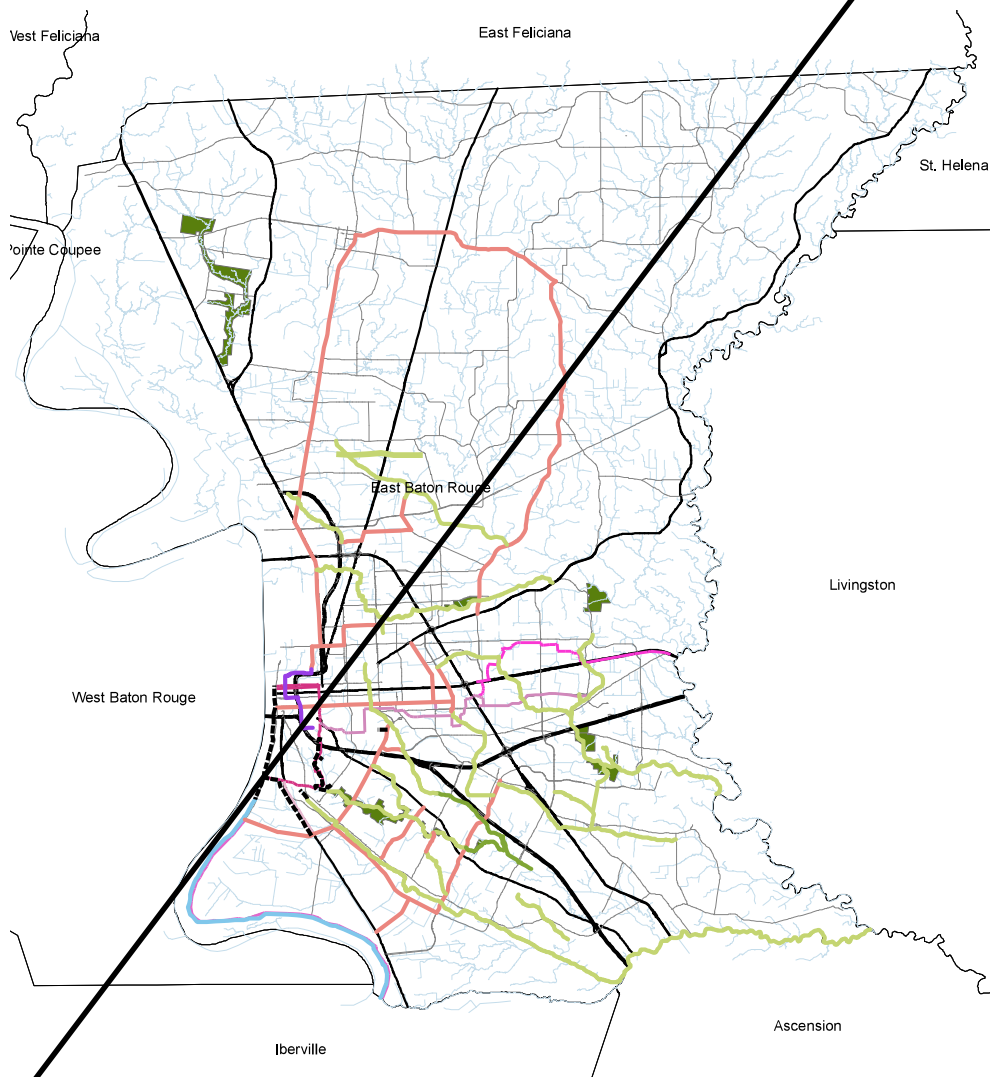
Traditionally bicycle infrastructure has only been integrated into major roadways within a region, if it is present at all. As a result, bicycling is seen by many as too dangerous or challenging to use as a daily form of transportation. Bicycling is limited on some state roads in the Parish because of the volume of traffic on the state roads, according to the

Creating Transportation Choices

statewide plan of the Department of Transportation and Developments (DOTD). The complete streets policy and standards include options for bicycle facilities on roadways to ensure that clear and safe bicycle routes also feed into the FUTUREBR transit system. The Plan employs a range of solutions to expand the bicycle network, including on-street bike lanes, separated paths, “bike boulevards” in low-traffic neighborhood streets, bicycle parking and visible signage and way-finding.



BREC Existing and Proposed Parks and Trails



An off-street system of multi-use paths is another significant element of the bicycle and pedestrian network, serving as the complement to on-street facilities such as sidewalks and bike lanes.

- Existing Trails
- BREC Proposed Trail
- DDD Proposed Trail
- Levee Trail Extension
- B+D Proposed Greenway Trail
- Pedestrian Street Improvement

- Major Arterial Road
- Minor Arterial Road
- Major Collector Road
- Streams
- Proposed Eco Parks
- Parish Boundary

Existing Bike Routes

- City Park - Sherwood
- Cortana - Flannery
- Downtown - LSU
- Farr Park Bicycle Training
- LSU - Farr Park

Creating Transportation Choices

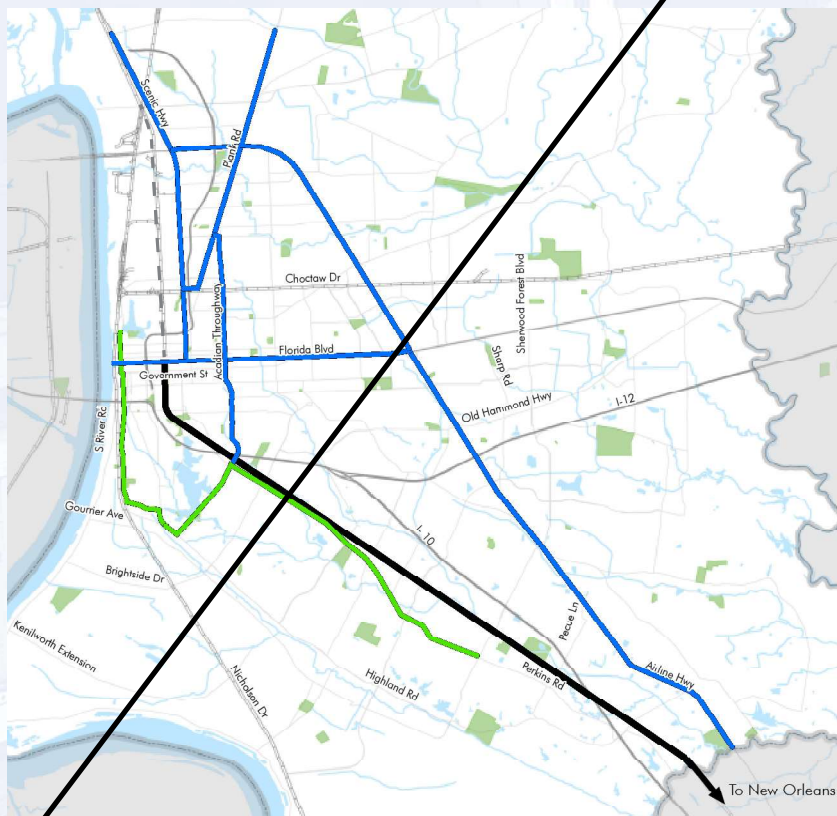
By increasing the annual investment, the bus system can become the backbone of the transportation network. It would support higher densities, provide transit choices and create a

Transit System Opportunities

Transit has the power to catalyze investment, revitalize corridors and move people around regions with ease. Since transit funding is limited, strategically focusing transit investment on lines that connect key centers of activity along primary and high-capacity corridors ripe for reinvestment can have compounding benefits for a region. Higher density development at these areas and along the primary corridors increases transit ridership, creates jobs, expands the local tax base and reduces congestion on the regional road network. Building a more dynamic bus system can have a significant impact of capturing more “optional” riders, those who have transportation alternatives, in addition to those riders who rely on public transportation as their only option.

Potential high-capacity corridors such as Florida Boulevard, Plank Road, Airline and Nicholson and concentrated population centers provide the needed critical mass of

Potential High-Capacity Transit Corridors



- Street car
- BRT frequent service bus
- Commuter rail
- Potential commuter rail line extension

Creating Transportation Choices

The Parish should aspire to a transit system that provides easy, pleasant and

development and activities to support expanded transit services. For example, the Mid City area is bisected by Florida Boulevard and Acadian Thruway and includes significant employers including Baton Rouge General Medical Center and Baton Rouge Community College. At the west end of this area, a regional train station is proposed. Just a short walk south of Florida Boulevard is Government Street, a burgeoning main street. This corridor includes many properties ready for reinvestment. In addition to focusing on high-capacity corridors, a downtown circular transit system could link close-in neighborhoods into a larger connected system.

Multi-modal Corridors

Investing in high-quality transit along corridors in downtown, Mid City, nearby university districts, new centers, and main streets and multi-modal corridors has the potential to make these areas some of the most desirable and intensively walked parts of the City-Parish. They will also be the most transit-rich, with frequent bus, and streetcar service within a few blocks of most homes and businesses. Transit is seen as a key component of the parish's overall economic development program, since transit investments have proven to spur reinvestment and revitalization in other similar communities.

Regional Rail

The economies of Baton Rouge and New Orleans are already tightly knit, but a secure passenger rail link between the two metro areas would significantly expand business opportunities for Baton Rouge. Establishing a secure, rapid link to the employers, goods, markets and New Orleans airport would greatly expand the economic competitiveness of the Baton Rouge/New Orleans region. Ultimately, a rail system linking Texas and points beyond through Louisiana to the east would enhance the economy of the entire coastal region.



Concept of potential development near a proposed regional rail stop in Mid City



Concept for a proposed regional rail stop in Mid City

Creating Transportation Choices



Parking

While transit, biking and walking are important pieces of the transportation system, a large portion of the Parish residents will continue to own and drive cars as their primary transportation choice. The parish's approach to parking should make optimal use of the land along main streets, downtown, and in new centers to better support pedestrian-friendly places. New centers, downtown and other gathering places should be served by parking districts, which provide just the right amount of parking capacity. Offices usually do not need parking spaces in the evenings, when restaurants and residences do, so these uses can share many of the same spaces over the course of the day. New development would no longer be required to provide large amounts of on-site parking for just a few days a year (such as during the busy holiday shopping season). Instead, people can take advantage of existing on-street parking and in public lots or garages that serve many businesses. This does not preclude developers from including additional parking on site, but the lower minimum requirements will allow the marketplace to determine how much parking is needed.

Creating Balanced Housing

Creating Balanced Housing

The nation's housing market is in the middle of a major shift. Demographic changes, combined with new market realities, mean that the Parish has a tremendous opportunity to plan for the housing needs of its future population. If the Parish is able to successfully implement housing that builds on emerging market dynamics, it will place itself at a major competitive economic advantage over its peer cities.

Rental Housing

One of the lessons emerging from the current housing downturn is that renting is becoming an increasingly desirable, and in many cases necessary, option for many individuals and families. Renting allows for flexibility and choices that owning does not. And the reality is that an increasingly mobile workforce values flexibility.

Owner-Occupied Housing

The median household income for the Parish's owners in 2008 was \$63,792. Most of the ownership housing in the Parish is single family – pointing to an opportunity to build townhomes, condos and cottage homes that are ownership products attractive to more diverse populations. Consumer research by Robert Charles Lesser and Company (RCLCO) and others show a housing market increasingly demanding denser housing. If local and national trends hold true, much of the Parish's future demand for ownership units will be in condo units, smaller townhomes and single family homes. These products, which are lacking today, could run the spectrum from basic entry-level condos for first-time homebuyers to luxury townhomes and compact single-family homes.



Creating Balanced Housing



This Vision Describes a Housing Future for the Parish That Includes:

- Choices for every resident from among many quality rental and ownership options across the price spectrum.
- New and renovated housing in downtown Baton Rouge and the City's inner neighborhoods.
- Housing styles (ranging from urban residential options to multi-generational housing) that meet the needs of a diverse and evolving population, including young people, seniors and immigrants.

Future Housing Mix

One housing forecast shows the Parish growing to 216,359 households by 2030 (an increase of more than 48,000 households). Accordingly, over the coming decades, the Parish could expect an average of more than 2,000 new households per year – highlighting the critical role of planning the Parish's new housing stock. Planning for housing is critical to the City-Parish's future. In particular, developing subsidized affordable housing for households earning fewer than \$15,000 will be critical. Equally important will be encouraging the market to provide additional housing options to owner and renter households earning between \$35,000 and \$100,000 annually. Because these households can afford from \$875-\$2,500 per month in housing costs, a range of products becomes possible.

Matching future housing mix with emerging market segments, Urban Land Institute's recently published *Housing in America* summarized the four demographic groups that will drive the new housing market nationally during the next several decades:

- **Older baby boomers**
- **Younger baby boomers**
- **Generation Y**
- **Immigrants and their children**

Even cities that already host a diverse housing mix are not adequately planning for future community housing needs. The housing demands of the Parish's future market segments will differ from the housing demands of the past or present – because of an aging population, new immigrants and a trend of younger people wanting to live close to daily amenities. These shifts highlight the opportunity to provide lifecycle housing – a concept designed to attract someone who is young and single to remain in the same neighborhood as he or she gets older, gets married, has children and then retires.

Capturing Regional Growth

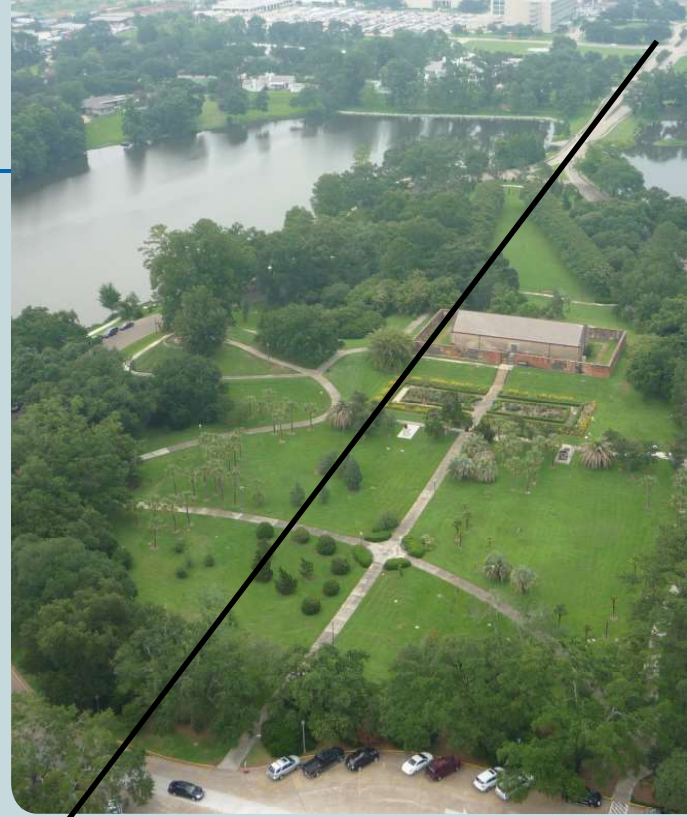
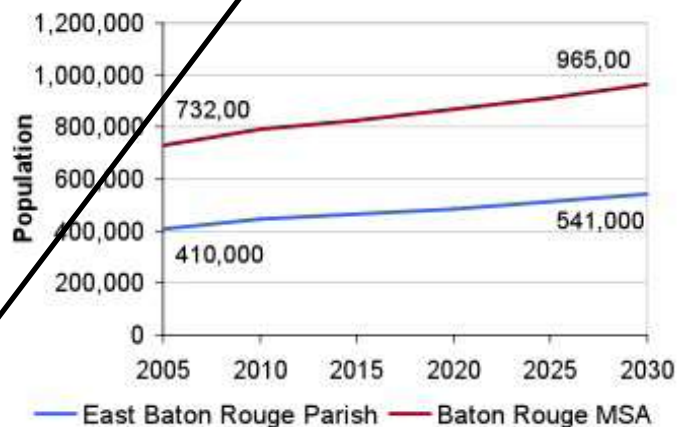
A New Direction

In light of demographic trends and the region's projected growth, East Baton Rouge will need to position itself as an attractive city to a broad range of people – young, old, locals and immigrants to the Parish. It will need to meet the demand for more housing types not widely found in the Parish in 2009 – lofts, condominiums, flats, cottages, live-work spaces – as well as traditional single-family homes. Regarding transportation, the Parish will need to continue to serve motorists, but also members of the community who would like to try transit, biking or walking, or are unable to drive. Alternative forms of transportation will become increasingly important as an economic issue, and as one that improves the Parish's environment.

Forecasts for the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) indicate that the Baton Rouge MSA will continue to grow at a modest rate through 2030. While most forecast continuing growth in jobs, some forecast a negligible growth in population, with most new population occurring in adjacent parishes to the east. When this was modeled as a scenario, the outcomes led to a decrease in the region's quality of life – not only was the Parish adversely impacted financially, the transportation system experienced much worse congestion. A much better scenario was to have the Parish capture its proportionate share of the regional growth, as it did prior to 1990. The FUTUREBR goal for 2030 is detailed below, and assumes that the Parish will capture roughly 56% of the region's growth over that period, thus maintaining its proportional size relative to the MSA.

The benefits that accrue to the Parish if this is accomplished are many, including an increase in new building construction value, an increase in the annual property tax, and the tangible increase in vitality, economic competitiveness and quality of life.

Growth Forecast for East Baton Rouge Parish Compared to the MSA



Creating a Diverse, Creative and Inclusive Culture for a Great City

All great cities of the future will serve as magnets for creativity. Diversity and acceptance of other cultures, ethnicities, and groups is central to attracting talent, new ideas and businesses and must be a cornerstone for the next Great American City. Baton Rouge is well positioned to expand on its role in this arena, with its culturally rich background, art offerings, and commitment to diversity.

The most inclusive cities are ultimately the most desirable for businesses, knowledgeable workers and a prosperous economy. This means Baton Rouge can focus on promoting both tangible and intangible measures that create inclusive neighborhoods. This is certainly the direction other leading Southern cities have taken – and will be a key competitive growth strategy for Baton Rouge.

Creating a Strong Economy



Creating a Strong Economy

A strong economic development program will foster economic prosperity, opportunity and sustainability in the parish and the region. The goals, objectives and strategic actions provided in this plan will help provide high quality jobs by retaining and attracting the businesses that supply those jobs, enabling new ventures to emerge and thrive; revitalizing employment centers; and efficiently providing infrastructure, improved quality-of-life, and a well-trained, innovative workforce.

Improving and Maintaining Infrastructure

Roads, sewers, water supply, communications infrastructure, public transit, and airports are important components of the parish's development capacity and long-term economic competitiveness. The more efficiently East Baton Rouge can provide or support expected infrastructure, the lower the cost of business development and operation will be.

Attracting and Retaining New Businesses

Related to infrastructure are public facilities and services such as schools, parks, cultural activities, public transportation and medical care. Businesses will be attracted to communities with the right mix of factors, existing businesses will expand for the same reasons, and talented employees will tend to stay in the Parish for a longer time.

Cultivating and Retaining Talent

A well-trained workforce is an essential component of economic development. Many firms rely on a local workforce rather than bringing workers with them or using a workforce outside the parish (through lengthy commutes). Though some companies require unskilled workers, most firms today require job-related skills (technical and specialized) in addition to quality secondary and higher education. Attracting talented entrepreneurs and providing them with support mechanisms to succeed will make the City-Parish a desirable location.

Enhancing the Profile of Higher Education and Research Institutions

Creating a Strong Economy

In addition to preparing the workforce, institutions of higher learning in the City-Parish also fulfill key research functions that can help stimulate innovation and attract investment. Higher education and research institutions should be recognized as economic drivers. The City-Parish and LSU should develop a “united front” of public and private interest within the Parish to support LSU’s efforts to secure state funding for higher education and to develop alternative ways of increasing LSU’s resources.

Improving Public and Private Incentives and Access to Capital

Incentives designed to attract new businesses and help existing businesses grow are significant for stimulating a thriving economy. They will foster more private business investment, new jobs and ultimately increase demand for goods and services. Access to capital is especially important for small businesses and technology-based businesses that are considered higher risk. Newer or start-up businesses, particularly those in creative services technology or bio-science, will often need angel and venture investments as well as public resources to be successful.

Supporting Private Sector Business Development

This goal focuses on specific activities the parish can engage in, often in partnership with economic development entities such as Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce (BRAC), to support and improve the business climate. These activities differ from those in the previous four goals, as they focus primarily on processes such as coordination, marketing, outreach and regulatory review.

Supporting Downtown and Key Employment Centers

The previous five goals describe things the parish can do to enhance economic development in the overall parish. This goal describes locations within the parish that are priorities – including downtown, the inner city neighborhoods and medical district – recognizing that, if these key areas are strong, so too will be other components for a livable community.



Robert Terrell

Managing Environmental Resources

Establishing native wetlands and contiguous forest canopy along corridors of a meaningful size will also provide for urban wildlife habitat and promote the development of passive recreational parks for the parish.

A Public Needs Assessment Commissioned by BREC for the East Baton Rouge Parish Found That:

- Citizens are supportive of conserving natural resources.
- Development is negatively affecting vegetative and animal habitats.
- Areas of archaeological significance are endangered by lack of conservation.
- Habitat loss is the most significant cause of loss of species diversity.
- There are approximately 130 documented archaeological and cultural sites in the parish, some of which are on BREC property.
- The amount of farmland is declining.

Managing Environmental Resources

Historically, the three main vegetation types that characterized East Baton Rouge Parish were longleaf pines, upland hardwoods, and bottomland hardwoods and cypresses. Today, loss of this habitat from development has reduced the diversity and density of wildlife in the parish. As well, areas of archaeological significance are endangered by lack of conservation. East Baton Rouge Parish has many outstanding natural features – such as bayous, wetlands, the Mississippi River, the Comite River and the Amite River – that are not only scenic but also are great reservoirs for natural wildlife.

FUTUREBR seeks to address these issues by promoting BREC priority actions and recommendations and establishing additional programs for land and natural resource conservation and management.

A Vision for Natural Areas

Currently, there are no federal or state designated land management areas within East Baton Rouge Parish. While privately owned properties do provide a small percentage of land conservation efforts, the large majority of the parish is subject to future agricultural and urban expansion. An environmental assessment for FUTUREBR will determine key areas for buying, conserving and restoring public land within the parish. Additional advantages will be better water quality and more recreational opportunities.

Managing Environmental Resources

Water Management

In the future, priority could be given to using drainage areas as public space for parks and/or wildlife corridors. Restoration of waterways should include re-naturalization of water banks, development of riparian coverage along these channels, and reestablishment or divergence to wetland systems for better stormwater discharge collection and treatment. One possible solution is to develop a wetland assimilation system where treated sanitary wastewater or other approved types of wastewaters are introduced into a suitable wetland to promote its growth and health.

Parks

With BREC currently owning, operating, and maintaining more than 170 parks within the parish, there are plenty of important opportunities for future park development. These include: establishing pedestrian connections between these parks and neighborhoods, enhancing and maintaining existing parks, and working toward building a parish park system of national quality.

Incorporate and Build on BREC's Strategic Initiatives

The Capital Region Planning Commission and BREC have recently invested in enhancing bike lanes and sidewalks along existing roads within the downtown and college campus areas. Further investment would help build bike lanes along primary or secondary roads that bisect trail systems that connect to parks and neighborhoods. As well, establishing parks that also provide environmental educational opportunities will help give residents a broader understanding and appreciation for Baton Rouge's natural environments.

Trails and Connections

The Parish has many opportunities to enhance the existing trail system, including linking centers, corridors and neighborhoods with the network of open spaces, greenways and trails; building a network of active and passive recreational spaces; and enhancing the Mississippi River levee trails as an amenity.

Providing Public Services

Creating a city of 20-minute neighborhoods requires that public services, facilities and health and human services are located strategically so people can meet their daily needs easily and efficiently. FUTUREBR provides a public service and facility plan that details existing facilities and identifies gaps and strategies to fill the gaps.



Robert Terrell



East Baton Rouge Parish experiences one of the most impacted water quality ratings within the state due to man-made alterations to the drainage basin.

Creating a riparian zone would establish continuous tree canopy coverage along a water body, providing protection for animal migration and habitat. In addition, a riparian zone would serve to filter stormwater runoff and reduce sediment loading into the water system. This helps to maintain a healthy aquatic habitat for fish, mussels, insects, and many other types of organisms that live within our streams and water bodies.

Thank you for imagining the possibilities and engaging friends and neighbors in a conversation about the future of our great city.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion



Thousands helped to create this Vision for East Baton Rouge Parish's future, infusing it with energy, enthusiasm and love for this special place. It's the culmination of hard work and many conversations with East Baton Rouge Parish residents—all of whom are dedicated to shaping a positive future of our community. Residents and stakeholders worked to take a look at the past, assess the present and imagine the future.

There is much to celebrate about East Baton Rouge Parish. There is a history of entrepreneurial spirit, tremendous resiliency, and wonderful communities and neighborhoods. Natural resources and open spaces are valued. Residents want the best for their children, including **exceptional** world-class school systems, opportunities for advanced education and training, and a strong economy that helps families and all Parish residents. There's a desire to reinvigorate the City's downtown and its economy, to attract and retain young people so that they have opportunities to succeed and raise their families, and to connect communities with diverse transportation options. These sentiments lie at the heart of what the **FUTUREBR Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Implementation Plan** seeks to nurture and improve.

A Vision for East Baton Rouge Parish



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